

## ADDRESS OF THE RETIRING PRESIDENT

### THE ACADEMY AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION \*

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It is my duty to report on the activities of the Academy of Medicine for the past two years during which it has been my privilege to serve as your President. I wish at this time to emphasize the influence of the Academy on medical education in New York. The Academy of Medicine has developed during the eighty years of its existence from a small medical club of local interest to the physicians of New York as a means of mutual conference and consultation concerning the science and art of medicine, into an educational institution of ever increasing influence over a constantly widening area.

In fostering the education of physicians of all ages the Academy has never taken part in the training of undergraduate students. Nor has it ever been a school for the intensive teaching of graduates and it never will be. The lectures presented at its stated meetings, the clinical demonstrations given by its twelve sections are open to the general medical public and to any others who may be interested. No fees and no tickets of admission are required. All the public work of the Academy is directed through two principal Committees, one on Public Health Relations and the second on Medical Education. Both Committees are essentially educational in their interests and work.

One of the least evident but most useful forms of activity is found in the Bureau of Clinical Information which keeps a daily bulletin of operations and clinics in a prominent position near the entrance of the Academy building. Some hundred operations in seventy-five hospitals are posted daily. In addition the Committee investigates all courses and clinics offered to graduates and

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gives its endorsement to those proven to be well-organized with adequate clinical material and equipment and conducted by clinicians and qualified teachers of known ability. Seven hundred and thirty-five visitors from out of town including one hundred and seventy-seven from thirty-five foreign countries registered in this bureau during the year.

The third course of practical lectures is being given weekly with an average attendance of 150 practitioners. The Bulletin of the Academy is published monthly in an edition of 2000 and presents in full the prominent papers read before the Academy and a resumé of the shorter communications of practical clinical value.

A closer relationship between the Academy and the Harvey Society has been brought about and the Harvey lectures will replace some of the stated meetings to the end that a greater scientific interest will be cultivated in all the proceedings of the Academy.

The Academy has accepted the responsibility of awarding at such intervals as it may determine a medal to be known as the Academy Medal. The conditions of the gift of a die and of an endowment fund to support the proposal as laid down by the donor, Dr. Samuel McCullagh, are broad and leave all detail to be decided from time to time by the Council. The award of the medal is to commemorate Distinguished Service in Medicine. Such an endowment by which prominent achievement by medical men shall be recognized and accentuated in a public manner by this scientific association of physicians cannot fail to prove to be a stimulus to work and study for the whole profession.

It was a privilege for this Academy to present on this platform the presiding judge of the Court of Appeals of New York State on the occasion of the Anniversary Discourse last November. In speaking to his chosen subject, "What Medicine can do for Law," Judge Cardozo reached a plane of thought which held his audience of lawyers,

physicians and laymen in strict attention while he developed the interrelation of law and medicine in the problems of crime, insanity and the deeper causes of irregular behavior in more careful detail than is usually evident in the routine either of hospitals, courts or correctional institutions. The address will soon be published in an appropriate form and given a wider public consideration than was possible in this assembly hall.

A new departure in the education of the profession was inaugurated this past fall when the Academy devoted the first two weeks of October to an intensive presentation of the subject "The Problems of Old Age." Daily lectures were given in the late afternoon and evening, and clinics were held at many hospitals in the morning and early afternoon hours. The attendance, as with all the functions of the Academy, was open to the public and the profession and without fee or admission ticket. It is felt by the Council that the experiment was a success and it will be repeated next fall when the subject of "Functional and Nervous Problems in Medicine and Surgery" will be presented in a similar thorough manner.

Another new relation has been created and the County Medical Society has joined with the Academy to create a Medical Information Bureau which is designed to give quickly to the public press reliable statements concerning new discoveries and medical problems which may arise in such daily occurrences as have the peculiar character of "news." Both the organized society of the county and the Academy hope that the natural development of this bureau will result in the publication in the newspapers of more trustworthy news of a medical nature than has sometimes been the fact in the past.

About half of the cubic contents of this building is occupied by the Library of the Academy. The Library contains some 300,000 books and pamphlets and is the chief factor in promoting education by the Academy. There is no other public medical library in Manhattan. A very excellent library is maintained by the Medical Society of

Kings County and the medical schools and several hospitals also have smaller reference libraries for the use of members, students and professional staffs. The great Public Library of the City at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue does not maintain a division of medical literature. The Academy appreciates its duty to the public as the owner of its collection of books and has extended the number of hours for attendance by the general public. It still reserves the evening hours for its Fellows and associate members. It is my opinion that this slight restriction of time for outside readers should be completely abolished.

It has been frequently said that old medical books are of no value except as waste paper. The Academy cannot endorse this view and its librarian is an enthusiastic collector of books of historical interest in tracing the growth and development of medical science. During the past year the notable collection of such books collected by Dr. Edward Streeter of Boston came into the market and the Academy, through the gifts of many friends and its own Fellows, was fortunate to secure the entire lot. This has added much to the historical value of the Academy's Library. An exhibition of medical incunabula is now on view in the Library and presents a very accurate survey of what the oldest medical books mean and represent. One of the happy results of the collection of the funds for this purchase was the formation of a separate endowment the income of which is to be devoted to the purchase of similar books of rarity and interest. This rare book fund amounts to over \$17,000 at the present time and it shall be my special endeavor to see it grow in the future.

It is my pleasure to express to you my appreciation of the honor you have done me in electing me to this office and to thank you for your confidence and coöperation. I assure you that your Academy has still before it an even greater future than its past. It is with great confidence and enthusiasm in that future that I turn over the duties of the office to my elected successor, Dr. John A. Hartwell.